

Jewish Rabbis - Master Teachers - #1 & #2  
(by Ray Vanderlaan)

1. Like other rabbis of the period from 100 BC to 100 AD, Jesus taught a "yoke" (an interpretation of Torah). He lived consistently according to His yoke of "love God and love your neighbor."
2. Rabbis often taught through *demonstration* (ie Jesus washing the talmidims' feet)
3. Many rabbis were reported to have healed people (we don't know if these healings were real), but no rabbi but Jesus was reported to have raised the dead. More than 50 rabbis have claimed to be the Messiah. The uniqueness of Jesus does not come from what He did, but from who He is. He is the Messiah!
4. There were two types of rabbis: 1) Torah teachers 2) "ordained" rabbis (ones with authority or *s'mikhah*) The average length of a Jewish sermon was 2 minutes!
5. Rabbis with authority: 1) traveled with their talmidim (a disciple never runs ahead of his rabbi) 2) often taught through demonstration 3) taught them to make talmidim 4) required a total commitment (a rabbi looked for ability and passion)
6. Christ followers have all been given Christ's *s'mikhah*.
7. **Jesus used the established teaching method (pedagogy) of Jewish rabbis:** He used: 1) *pardec* (pronounced *pardis*) 2) parables (a simple story illustrating a moral truth) 3) eastern thought form ("I am the bread of life") 4) idioms - an expression with a special meaning to a particular culture (*a good eye* = a person with a generous nature)

*pardec* (meaning "orchard") consisted of :

**p'shat** (means *simple* or *plain* or *direct*) = exegesis; to draw out the obvious ("it is written serve only God")

**remez** (means *hint* or *clue*) - its use assumes one's audience knows the text so well that they know the verses before or after the one the teacher is quoting. (Over 300 in the NT)

**drash** or midrash (means *search*) = a statement of application (a faith lesson) from an Old Testament story (a special kind of *drash* called a *kal v' chomer* takes an insignificant truth and builds a case for a more important one) ie "if God clothes the grass, will He not much more clothe you?"

**sod** (means *secret*) - Jesus may not have used this technique but . . . (in the land of 12 he fed 5,000 and in the land of 7 he fed 4,000; also the demon infested pigs ran down the mountain and into the abyss {hell})

8. **Torah** (translated *law* in our New Testament) means *guidebook or teaching* (not a collection of rigid laws)

9. To *fulfill the law* = to make the Torah so clear that it can be obeyed perfectly  
To *abolish the law* = to undermine the Torah by misinterpreting it

10. Written Torah = the first 5 books of our Bible. **The oral Torah was generally an honest attempt by Godly people to interpret the written Torah.** (*Mishna* - interpretation of written Torah.) Jesus perfectly kept the written Torah and generally kept the oral Torah. *Tradition* is necessary for society to exist. ie Each state legislature interprets (establishes a "tradition") the Constitution. *Wisdom* not *knowledge* was the focus of a rabbi's teaching.

11. **In the Old Testament as in the New Testament God saves His people by grace and grace alone.**

12. **To a Jew of Jesus time "eternal life" never meant salvation or Heaven but described a person who gratefully obeyed the Torah.** (Jesus blessed God not the bread!)

13. *Loosing* = what is permitted; *binding* = what is not permitted

14. The greatest rabbis attempted to divide their oral teaching into 3 techniques of approximately 1/3 each: 1/3 *halakhah* (legal interpretation ie Love your neighbor as yourself), 1/3 *haggadah* (an illustration of what he means ie "He sang a dirge and they didn't cry"), 1/3 parable (Jesus' teaching as recorded in the 4 Gospels is precisely in this ratio!)

15. *Parables* were one of the ways a rabbi communicated his yoke on the Torah to his talmidim.

16. There were over 4,000 Jewish parables recorded between 100 BC and 100 AD. Jesus generally used a well known parable and gave it His own powerful twist. ie. the "prodigal son" was rejected by his father in the parables taught by other rabbis.

17. The key themes of Jesus' parables were: 1) the ways in which God deals with people 2) how people should treat one another 3) the Kingdom of Heaven (God)

18. Jesus' definition of the Kingdom of Heaven is: **the reign of God wherever it is found.** He teaches that it is like a seed within a human being that has been planted by God, and it is unstoppable!

19. If you understand Jesus' definition of the Kingdom of God, then the parables will help you understand His teaching.